

Serial No. 09/968,181

Art Unit 2854

The following amendments and remarks are provided in response to the Action and the telephone interview.

Amendments

Amendments to Claims Under Revised 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(c)

The Applicants respectfully request amendment of claim 32 as provided below. The Applicants respectfully request cancellation of claims 33-36 without prejudice to the subject matter contained therein.

32. (Currently Amended) A method for forming and solidifying uniform sized and shaped solid spheres, the method comprising:

providing a supply of a low viscosity liquid material in a crucible,
applying a minute periodic disturbance to the low viscosity liquid material in the crucible,

applying a pressure to the low viscosity liquid material, the pressure forcing the material through at least one orifice in the crucible as a steady laminar stream, the stream of the material exiting into an enclosed controlled low temperature solidification environment having a temperature of less than about 0° C., the enclosed controlled low temperature solidification environment having a top portion and a bottom portion containing at least one heat transfer medium provided to the top portion of the temperature solidification environment at a first temperature and provided to the bottom portion of the temperature solidification environment at a second temperature forming to establish a heat gradient within the enclosed controlled low temperature solidification environment;

breaking the stream of material up into a plurality of uniform sized and shaped liquid spheres, and

allowing the liquid spheres to pass through the heat transfer medium in the top portion and the bottom portion of the enclosed controlled low temperature solidification environment to cool and solidify into the uniform sized and shaped solid spheres.

33-36. (Cancelled)

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Addition of Claims Under Revised 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(c)

The Applicants respectfully request the addition of claims 37- 40 to the present application.

37. (New) The method of claim 32, wherein the at least one heat transfer medium includes one of a cooling fluid, a liquefied gas and a liquid halo-carbon.

38. (New) The method of claim 37, wherein the at least one heat transfer medium in the first portion of the temperature solidification environment absorbs heat of fusion from the liquid spheres.

39. (New) The method of claim 32, wherein the bottom portion of the temperature solidification environment includes a second heat transfer medium.

40. (New) The method of claim 39, wherein the second heat transfer medium includes a supply of a liquid material which removes heat from the spheres.